

**Security Council**

Distr.: General
21 August 2013

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General on the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau**I. Introduction**

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolutions 2048 (2012) and 2103 (2013), and covers major political, security, human rights, humanitarian and socioeconomic developments since my report of 6 May 2013 (S/2013/262).

II. Restoration of and respect for constitutional order**A. Political situation****1. Overview of the political situation in the country**

2. During the reporting period, the key political stakeholders of Guinea-Bissau reached consensus on arrangements for the remainder of the transition. International partners also pursued joint efforts towards assisting the country to address the challenges it faces.

3. On 30 April, representatives of the signatories of the transitional political pact and the political agreement of May 2012 agreed on key steps towards the restoration of constitutional order, namely, (a) that the political transition should end on 31 December 2013 and general elections should be held in November 2013; (b) that an inclusive Transitional Government should be appointed; and (c) that the National Assembly should elect the President of the National Electoral Commission on a proposal from the Supreme Council of Magistrates. To enhance the inclusiveness of the political consultations, non-parliamentary actors such as political parties, religious leaders and civil society organizations were included in the parliamentary commission, which was established by the National Assembly to review the transitional political pact and the political agreement of May 2012.

4. Meanwhile, negotiations continued on the formation of a more inclusive Transitional Government. As a result, the two biggest parties in Parliament, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) and the Party for Social Renewal (PRS) signed a memorandum of understanding on 17 May, in which they committed themselves to supporting the end of the transition by 31 December 2013, and to the formation of an inclusive Transitional Government.



The two parties also emphasized the need for a framework for dialogue and consultations that would go beyond the transitional period. They further agreed to retain Mr. Rui Duarte de Barros as Transitional Prime Minister.

5. The Transitional Prime Minister initiated consultations on the formation of a new Transitional Government on 27 May, while the National Assembly held an extraordinary session from 27 to 29 May to discuss the transitional instruments. The Assembly adopted a Transitional Pact and Political Agreement, a Transition Road Map, and an Agreement on Principles for the Restoration of Constitutional Normality. The new Transitional Pact and Political Agreement provides, *inter alia*, for an amnesty for those involved in the military coup of 12 April 2012. It also provides for the establishment of a consultative council (Conselho de Concertação e Consulta) as a forum for political and social dialogue for the signatories of the Transitional Pact and Political Agreement, and for the re-establishment of the Parliamentary Commission on National Reconciliation.

6. My Special Representative for Guinea-Bissau, José Ramos-Horta, intensified his good offices, presenting national stakeholders with options for overcoming their differences in an inclusive and constructive fashion. On 6 June, reflecting the agreement between PAIGC and PRS, the Transitional President appointed a more inclusive Transitional Government led by Mr. Barros, who was retained as Transitional Prime Minister. The new Cabinet consists of 34 members, four of whom are women.

7. On 12 June, the National Assembly held an extraordinary session and elected Supreme Court Judge Augusto Mendes as President of the National Electoral Commission. It also elected Appeal Court Judge José Pedro Sambú as the Executive Secretary, and Katia Maria Augusta Lopes and Idríça Djaló as the Deputy Executive Secretaries of the Commission. The new leadership was sworn in on 14 June. On 28 June, the Transitional President issued a decree announcing that presidential and legislative elections would be held on 24 November 2013.

8. On 3 July, the Transitional Prime Minister presented the programme of the Transitional Government to the National Assembly. The programme focuses on the restoration of constitutional order and includes (a) the organization of presidential and legislative elections on 24 November 2013, and the revision of the Electoral Law and the overall legal framework to ensure a more transparent electoral process; (b) steps for the adoption of a legal framework for the country's first-ever municipal elections in 2014; (c) defence, security, justice and public administration reforms; (d) economic stabilization and transparency in fiscal management, the normalization of cooperation with international financial institutions, the promotion of agricultural and infrastructural development, and preparations for the holding of a donor round table in 2014; and (e) the continuing promotion of social harmony. The programme also stresses the Transitional Government's determination to improve the country's image and to strengthen its participation in subregional, regional and international organizations.

9. Following intensive consultations between my Special Representative and the transitional authorities, on 24 July, the Transitional Government created the National Commission for Planning and Strategic Coordination, whose task is to define the priorities for the remainder of the transition and its immediate aftermath. The Commission will develop a plan for the remainder of the transition that addresses needs in the areas of food security, health and education, outline priorities

for the first year of the government that will be formed following the presidential and legislative elections in November 2013, and plan a donor round table in 2014.

2. Overview of the human rights situation in the country

10. During the reporting period, the human rights situation remained largely unchanged; a number of cases of human rights violations and abuses were reported. The limited capacity of the security and justice sectors contributed to a persisting culture of impunity and lack of accountability in the country.

11. On 25 April, the Regional Military Court rendered its verdict in the case of the 17 suspects arrested in connection with the incident at the Bissalanca air force base in Bissau on 21 October 2012. Nine of the defendants were convicted of treason and dealing in prohibited weapons, and sentenced to three to five years of imprisonment, amid concerns over the independence and impartiality of the court. The nine convicted suspects appealed the verdict, and the case was still pending during the reporting period. Those convicted remained in detention at the air force base.

12. From 8 to 11 July, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Ivan Šimonović, conducted a four-day mission to Guinea-Bissau at the invitation of the Transitional Government, to discuss the human rights situation in the country. He met with the Transitional President and the Transitional Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Parliament, the Ministers of Justice and the Interior of the Transitional Government, the Presidents of the Supreme Court and the Superior Military Court, the President of the National Human Rights Commission, civil society organizations, women's organizations, and international partners present in Bissau.

13. The Assistant Secretary-General also participated in the National Conference on Impunity, Justice and Human Rights from 10 to 12 July. The Conference was held pursuant to the recommendations of the Bamako Declaration and its strategic framework, which were adopted on 4 December 2011 by the Regional Conference on Impunity, Justice and Human Rights held in Mali. Guinea-Bissau is the first participating State to convene such a conference.

14. The Conference adopted a range of recommendations, including proposals for (a) reforms in the justice, public administration, security and defence sectors; (b) the establishment of a commission of inquiry into political assassinations and other politically motivated crimes; (c) the ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court; and (d) the promotion of national unity and good citizenship through comprehensive human rights education.

15. In his meetings with national stakeholders, the Assistant Secretary-General emphasized the importance of ensuring freedom of expression and peaceful assembly before, during and after the elections. He also noted that those guarantees were vital not only for the credibility of the elections but also to foster longer-term stability. He drew particular attention to the issues of violence and discrimination against women, and recommended the adoption of measures to increase women's participation in public and political life, including the introduction of minimum quotas for women in the next elections. He also urged the national authorities to provide greater protection for human rights defenders, journalists, victims and witnesses, and emphasized the urgency of ensuring effective and credible progress in the investigations into political assassinations and other cases of political violence prior to the elections of 2013, in order to deter future attacks.

16. During the period under review, the prohibition of press conferences, interviews or communiqués relating to the coup d'état of 12 April 2012 and other "cases under investigation", as announced in a communiqué issued by the Prosecutor General on 29 September 2012, remained in force. However, no new overt attempts to curtail the freedom of the media were reported.

3. Regional and international efforts towards the restoration of and respect for constitutional order

17. On 10 May, the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission convened a meeting of the configuration in New York. During the meeting, my Special Representative appealed to the international community, including the Peacebuilding Commission, to re-engage with Guinea-Bissau. He noted that the Commission and Guinea-Bissau should revise their instrument of engagement (revised strategic framework), which could be initiated before the upcoming elections. He concluded by expressing hope that the Peacebuilding Fund would be able to provide its share of support to the ongoing peacebuilding efforts.

18. On that occasion, the Chair affirmed that the configuration would continue to follow closely the situation in Guinea-Bissau and support, in close coordination with my Special Representative, efforts to find a lasting solution to the political crisis. She also indicated that once meaningful steps were taken to restore constitutional order, such as the formation of a more inclusive Transitional Government and the adoption of a new "regime pact" and a road map for holding elections by the end of 2013, the configuration would resume its engagement with Guinea-Bissau.

19. On 16 May, the European Union released a communiqué following a meeting with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) held in Brussels, expressing its readiness to support elections in Guinea-Bissau once all the requirements were met. The communiqué also indicated the European Union and ECOWAS agreement that meaningful and irreversible reforms were essential for the country's stabilization and prosperity, starting with the complete restructuring of the defence and security forces, particularly the renewal of the top military leadership, and far-reaching reforms in the security and justice sectors and the political system. The European Union and ECOWAS also expressed grave concern about the worrying infiltration in State structures of organized crime and illicit drug trafficking networks, noting that the detention of the former Navy Chief of Staff, Bubo Na Tchuto, in the United States on drug trafficking charges and the indictment by the United States of the current Chief of General Staff, General António Indjai, for alleged trafficking illustrated the gravity of the problem. They stressed that persons linked to any further violence or anti-constitutional and destabilizing activities would be held accountable by the international community. They commended the renewed involvement of the international community in Guinea-Bissau, in particular through the close collaboration between the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), ECOWAS, the European Union and the United Nations. Finally, they stressed the importance of the preservation and good management of the natural resources of Guinea-Bissau in accordance with applicable laws. On 18 June, the Council of the European Union decided to maintain restrictions against 21 military personnel of Guinea-Bissau involved in the coup of 12 April 2012, including the leaders of the military.

20. International partners welcomed the formation of the new Transitional Government on 6 June. The Government of Portugal, on 11 June, described the move as a positive development that created expectations of democratic normalization.

21. The African Union Peace and Security Council and the European Union Political and Security Committee, at their sixth annual joint consultative meeting, held in Addis Ababa on 11 June, urged the new Transitional Government to prioritize preparations for democratic elections leading to the restoration of constitutional order before the end of the year. The two organs stressed the need to implement security sector reform and to fight organized crime, illicit drug trafficking and illegal fishing. They also stressed the need to protect human rights, to promote the rule of law and to end impunity in the country. In addition, they highlighted the importance of the preservation and management of Guinea-Bissau's natural resources, including the sustainable exploitation of marine and land resources. They commended the joint efforts of the African Union, ECOWAS, CPLP, the European Union and the United Nations towards the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau.

22. The second joint assessment mission of the African Union, ECOWAS, CPLP, the European Union and the United Nations was conducted in Bissau from 8 to 11 July. In addition to the original five entities, the International Organization of la Francophonie participated in the mission. The mission met with the transitional authorities, political parties, civil society organizations, women's groups and the diplomatic corps accredited to Guinea-Bissau in order to receive an update on the current political, security and socioeconomic situation. The mission was encouraged by the considerable progress on the transitional process, including the approval of the consensual revised Transitional Pact and Political Agreement, the appointment of the President and members of the National Electoral Commission and the designation of 24 November 2013 as the date for the elections. National stakeholders were unanimously of the view that the problems of Guinea-Bissau will not end with the elections, as the structural causes of the recurring political crises in the country will need to be fundamentally addressed. Some of the stakeholders strongly expressed the view that, in order to ensure sustainable stability in the medium to long term, it was necessary to maintain a culture of inclusive and broad-based government after the forthcoming elections. The mission recommended reviving the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau in the coming months, including the establishment of its Bissau-based chapter. It also recommended the establishment of a follow-up mechanism integrating the Bissau-based representatives of the African Union, the United Nations, ECOWAS, and the European Union. The mission encouraged CPLP and the International Organization of la Francophonie to deploy representatives in Bissau.

23. The Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS welcomed the signing of the revised transitional instruments in a communiqué issued on 18 July at their forty-third ordinary session, held in Abuja. They urged the authorities of Guinea-Bissau to ensure the holding of presidential and legislative elections on 24 November 2013, as scheduled. They also reiterated their call on the African Union and other international partners to lift the sanctions imposed on Guinea-Bissau following the coup of 12 April 2012, and to resume bilateral cooperation with the country. They directed the ECOWAS Commission to take urgent steps, in close consultation with other international partners, to resume the meetings of the International Contact

Group on Guinea-Bissau. Finally, they extended the mandate of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) for another 12 months, until 16 May 2014.

24. My Special Representative attended the eighteenth regular meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries in Maputo on 18 July. The Council adopted a declaration on the situation in Guinea-Bissau reiterating the Community's "unconditional" support for Guinea-Bissau and the importance of coordinating its efforts with other international partners. The Council's declaration also noted that the lack of effective civilian oversight over the defence and security forces threatens the political process and the functioning of State institutions. The Council urged political actors in Guinea-Bissau to ensure the holding of elections with full respect for democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to create conditions for the safe return and freedom of all citizens in exile, while fighting impunity and drug trafficking. In addition, the Council decided that CPLP would appoint a Special Representative to Guinea-Bissau.

4. Efforts towards a democratic electoral process

25. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2103 (2013) in which the Council mandated the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), *inter alia*, to assist in creating an environment conducive to the holding of free, fair and transparent elections, I dispatched a needs assessment mission to Bissau from 3 to 16 July. The mission, which was composed of representatives of the Electoral Affairs Division of the Department of Political Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNIOGBIS, met with a broad range of interlocutors, including both national and international stakeholders. The mission took note of the stated commitment of the Transitional Government to conduct the elections by the announced date of 24 November 2013. It however observed that there was limited activity in preparation for the elections, and that public debate on the elections had largely focused on modalities for conducting the registration of voters, reiterating previous concerns about the existing manual registration system. The mission advised the Transitional Government to consider improvements to the existing manual registration system, to make up for the identified deficiencies, rather than introducing the biometric system, considering the short time frame of the remainder of the transition and the high estimated costs of conducting biometric voter registration.

26. Similarly, at the ministerial meeting of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council held in Abuja on 15 July, most members of the Council objected to the introduction of biometric voter registration for the upcoming elections as proposed by the Transitional Government, arguing that it would negatively affect the electoral timeline, and would require substantial funds that are not available.

27. Since the signatories of the Transitional Pact and Political Agreement had consensually expressed preference for biometric voter registration, the Transitional President met with political parties and civil society organizations on 22 July to discuss the voter registration methodology in an effort to ensure consensus on a realistic approach. He tasked the Parliamentary Commission, which was established to review the transitional instruments of May 2012, to advise whether manual or biometric voter registration would be suitable for the country. He also requested the Commission to review the electoral legislation and propose necessary amendments. The Commission submitted its report to the Transitional President on 1 August. He

announced on 2 August that "improved" manual voter registration would be used for the general elections of 24 November, and that an amendment to the electoral law would be submitted to Parliament.

B. Security situation

28. During the reporting period, the security situation remained calm. Following a meeting of the Transitional President and a delegation of the Nigerian armed forces, the Guinea-Bissau Chief of General Staff announced, on 6 May, that the Transitional Government had requested ECOWAS, and particularly Nigeria, to support Guinea-Bissau in jointly patrolling its territorial waters to help fight illicit drug, arms and human trafficking. On 17 May, national media carried a report by a representative of the ocean initiative of *National Geographic*, which highlighted extensive illegal fishing in Guinea-Bissau's waters.

29. A delegation from ECOWAS consisting of the Chiefs of Defence Staff of Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Togo, and a representative of the Chief of Defence Staff of Senegal, arrived in Bissau on 27 May. Addressing the handover and contingent rotation and command ceremony of ECOMIB on the same day, the Chief of Defence Staff of Côte d'Ivoire highlighted the challenges confronting the mission. He underlined the importance of and the need to speed up the security sector reform process, and to ensure the efficient handling of the welfare of veterans of the liberation war. He also mentioned the future role of the ECOMIB police units in support of efforts to ensure security during the upcoming elections. The ECOWAS military chiefs met with the Transitional President and the Transitional Prime Minister on 27 May and participated in a meeting with the Guinea-Bissau Chief of General Staff on 28 May to discuss regional defence and security issues. They also focused on the status of implementation of the memorandum of understanding concerning the road map for the defence and security sector reform programme signed by ECOWAS and Guinea-Bissau in November 2012, particularly the rehabilitation of military installations and implementation of the pension fund programme for members of the defence and security institutions. The Chief of Defence Staff of Côte d'Ivoire also highlighted the need to improve the living conditions of ECOMIB personnel.

30. On 31 May, the commanding officer of ECOMIB confirmed to UNIOGBIS that ECOMIB was conducting patrols in all regions of the country, with the exception of the Bijagos islands. He also stated that ECOMIB had commenced the coordination of future activities related to military and police training with the Ministry of Defence, as part of the security sector reform process. He affirmed that ECOWAS was planning for the reinforcement of ECOMIB with an extra police company to better support the electoral process.

III. Socioeconomic and humanitarian situation

31. The overall economic and social situation in the country remained difficult during the reporting period and the State continued to face challenges in meeting its financial commitments. The situation was compounded by an uncertain cashew export season that could further jeopardize economic growth prospects, weaken the State financially and worsen the already deteriorating food security situation in

the country. The State budget for 2013, which was approved on 15 July, will require budgetary support of CFAF 12 billion (US\$ 24 million), of which only about 25 per cent has been secured.

32. The current cashew export season was negatively affected by lack of coordination among different operators and government institutions on setting key parameters, such as the indicative price and the export surcharge. It also suffered from controversies and delays in operationalizing a new agency to promote the cashew sector and liquidity shortages in local commercial banks. On 13 June, the National Assembly urged the Transitional Government to immediately reset the export tax at CFAF 50 per kg of cashew nuts and to urgently adopt mechanisms for monitoring and implementing a minimum reference price of CFAF 210 per kg.

33. The international price for cashew remained relatively low compared to previous years, which had a direct impact on food security since the cost of rice, the country's staple food, had remained relatively high in local markets. About 80 per cent of households depend on income from the production of cashew nuts for their livelihoods. As a result, many households resorted to various negative coping strategies, such as reducing the quantity and quality of meals, destocking livestock, as well as seasonal migration. In the most severely affected regions (Quinara, Oio, Biombo and Bijagos), food insecurity affected 40 per cent of the population. In addition according to a rapid food security assessment conducted jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme with relevant government bodies in June 2013, an estimated 48 per cent of households had stocks of cereals that would last for only one month.

34. From 28 April to 10 May, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) fielded a consultative mission to Guinea-Bissau. The mission confirmed a growth rate of minus 1.5 per cent in 2012, but indicated that the economy could rebound to a 3.5 per cent growth in 2013, subject to certain conditions, including a positive cashew export season. The mission's report stressed that recurrent internal conflicts had negatively affected Guinea-Bissau's economic growth, as well as efforts to reduce poverty, thus affecting social advancement in the country. It also highlighted the fact that the country's economic performance would be contingent on an inclusive political process and progress in security sector reform efforts.

35. From 16 to 18 June, the World Bank fielded a mission to Guinea-Bissau to discuss economic development priorities with the Transitional Government and development partners, and the support already being provided in the context of a decision by its Board on a possible re-engagement of the World Bank in the last quarter of the year.

36. In close collaboration with IMF and the World Bank, UNDP continued to closely monitor the economic and financial situation in the country, to analyse information on both the cashew season and the implementation of the budget, and to provide technical advice to the Transitional Government on planning, public finance management and coordination.

37. Since May, an increasing number of cholera cases have been reported in the Tombali region. As at 7 August, 260 cholera cases and 22 fatalities had been reported. The Ministry of Health had activated the Epidemic Management Committee to coordinate actions aimed at containing the outbreak in Tombali and promoting preventive actions countrywide. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has

been supporting preparedness and response activities, including advocacy for the declaration of an epidemic by the Transitional Government. A fundraising strategy was being developed by the United Nations country team for a multisectoral response in the whole country, including prevention and case management.

38. The period under review was marked by strikes by civil servants demanding the payment of unpaid salary arrears and subsidies, as well as improved working conditions. On 7 May, public school teachers went on strike for the third time in the 2012/13 school year. As the Transitional Government and the two teachers' unions failed to reach an agreement, the two unions extended the strike for over two weeks, jeopardizing completion of the school year, in which children had already lost over a third of classes. My Special Representative and UNICEF undertook mediation efforts between the teachers' unions and the Transitional Government, which resulted in the ending of the strike on 23 May. Indications were that the strike had not affected all regions in the country. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education in identifying the essential curriculum to be covered so that the most affected regions could take compensatory measures, such as extending the school year by one to two weeks. Workers of the health sector launched a seven-day strike on 4 June, endangering the health and lives of patients who were sent home from hospitals for lack of personnel.

39. Meanwhile, the press focused on increased illicit exploitation of natural resources during the reporting period, especially illegal logging. The rate of depletion of the few remaining forests in the country and related ecosystems had continued unabated. During an extraordinary session of the National Assembly on 13 June, parliamentarians approved a resolution on illegal logging, requesting the Government to urgently address the situation.

IV. Observations

40. The Transitional Government and political actors have made important progress by approving the consensual Transitional Pact and Political Agreement, setting up a broad-based inclusive Transitional Government, appointing the President and members of the National Electoral Commission and setting the date of 24 November 2013 for the elections. I am encouraged that stakeholders in Guinea-Bissau were able to accommodate their diverse perspectives and reach consensus on these crucial steps towards the restoration of constitutional order.

41. I urge national stakeholders to make every effort to hold the legislative and presidential elections within the agreed time schedule. It is critical to ensure a credible, transparent, inclusive and democratic electoral process at all stages. I welcome the announcement by the Transitional President that improved manual voter registration will be used for the general elections of 24 November. I urge all stakeholders to uphold the principle of consensus going forward, and to agree on an electoral code of conduct aimed at creating a peaceful electoral environment. I call on Guinea-Bissau's international partners to contribute to this vital electoral process. The United Nations will continue to provide assistance in line with the recommendations of the recent needs assessment mission and to support the mobilization of necessary resources.

42. While presidential and legislative elections are a prerequisite to the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau, the country needs to depart from decades

of political and military instability and a "winner takes all" approach to politics. Elections should be followed by longer-term concerted efforts aimed at addressing the structural root causes of political instability and discontent. In the interim, there needs to be a new culture of politics which favours consensus and inclusion, so that the State can be rebuilt and serve the interests of all citizens rather than those of a few. I therefore urge national stakeholders, in particular political actors, to pursue the route of constructive and inclusive dialogue aimed at building consensus on the key reforms that must be undertaken in the coming years.

43. In this regard, I welcome the creation of the National Commission for Planning and Strategic Coordination. The expansion of the United Nations presence from two to four regional offices will strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to support national actors in extending the consultations beyond Bissau, thus ensuring meaningful nationwide participation in efforts towards the restoration of constitutional order and the promotion of good governance and socioeconomic development.

44. The progress made in recent months in the political process is also due to the engagement of international partners. I call on the international partners of Guinea-Bissau to remain engaged so as to promote further progress. I also welcome the initiative of the African Union to lead the second joint assessment mission to Guinea-Bissau, involving ECOWAS, CPLP, the European Union, the International Organization of la Francophonie and the United Nations, from 8 to 10 July. The mission helped the participating entities to forge a common understanding of the evolving situation in the country. It also served to reassure the citizens of Guinea-Bissau of the international community's will to continue to assist them in the search for sustainable solutions to the political crisis.

45. I commend the leadership and efforts of Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti in her capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission from December 2007 to May 2013, which contributed to the advancement of the country's peacebuilding process. The configuration should continue to play a critical role in support of national efforts towards the restoration of constitutional order and the consolidation of peace, stability and economic development.

46. I remain concerned about the persisting culture of impunity and lack of accountability in Guinea-Bissau. I welcome the holding of the National Conference on Impunity, Justice and Human Rights in Bissau in July 2013, and I urge once again the transitional authorities to take swift action to fight impunity and promote justice. I call on national stakeholders to implement the recommendations of the Conference, as a matter of urgency.

47. Guinea-Bissau faces a difficult socioeconomic situation caused by multiple factors, including a negative cashew export season that has a direct impact on the livelihoods of rural communities and increases food insecurity and malnutrition. I therefore urge the international community and other partners to seek ways to fund assistance programmes for those affected communities.

48. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to the staff of UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team, under the leadership of my Special Representative, José Ramos-Horta, as well as to Guinea-Bissau's regional and international partners for their contributions to the efforts to restore constitutional order and promote peacebuilding in the country.